

## Testimonial Statement - Reinhard

- Good morning. My name is Tonia Reinhard, Registered Dietitian. I live in Washington Township. I'm the Director of Wayne State University's Dietetics Program. I'm also the Course Director of Clinical Nutrition at Wayne State's School of Medicine and Adjunct Professor at University of Detroit Mercy's School of Dentistry.
- In addition to my testimonial statement, I've provided three handouts to the Committee. I hope these will clarify some of the issues raised in testimony last Tuesday and I'm happy to address any questions related to the handouts following my testimony.
- Dietitian Nutritionists should be licensed in Michigan. There are two primary reasons:
  - First: the public needs to be protected when they seek medical nutrition therapy
    - For those who may not be familiar with the term "medical nutrition therapy", or "MNT", MNT is NOT a coach telling an athlete that he should eat more protein. MNT is highly individualized nutrition intervention that can seriously impact a patient's health. It might be counseling, therapeutic diet changes up to complex intravenous feeding.
    - Here are two examples:
      - 1: Potassium is an essential nutrient. As a general rule, people need essential nutrients. However, if someone with kidney disease gets too much potassium, he can die.
      - 2: Diabetes: The American Diabetes Association recognizes proper diet as one of the most important tools to control diabetes. Patients with diabetes who don't receive proper MNT are at increased risk for kidney disease, heart attack, blindness, and amputation.

There are serious ramifications for patients who don't receive competent nutrition care services. We need licensure to protect Michigan patients.

- The second reason Dietitian Nutritionists should be licensed in Michigan is the widespread support of Michigan healthcare professionals. We received and forwarded to the committee numerous letters of support in opposition to this bill from thousands of our colleagues on the health care team. These professionals know the rigorous education standards for Registered Dietitians and value and trust their expertise.
  - As an example, when the Wayne State School of Medicine needed to add clinical nutrition into their curriculum based on national accreditation standards, they had their pick of doctorate-level researchers in nutrition and allied fields. They specifically sought out Registered Dietitians to train future doctors. The same is true for U of D Mercy School of Dentistry.

Now, I've given my reasons for licensure: protection of patients seeking MNT and improving the healthcare landscape in Michigan. I was specifically asked to speak here today because of my experience in dietetics education.

The accreditation standards for a nationally recognized dietetics program, like the one at Wayne State, are extremely rigorous and outcomes oriented. At Wayne State, we've had requests from multiple foreign programs—Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon—asking how they can create programs that will qualify for the same accreditation. People who don't go through a nationally recognized program simply do not have the same level of training as those who do.

I've been through the accreditation process three times with Wayne State's dietetics program, so I'm happy to answer any questions the Committee may have regarding educational standards. ***Thank you.***